

ARPA Open Forum Minutes

Tuesday, October 12, 2021
7:00 pm- Following Town Meeting
Woodstock Middle School Gym

Town of Woodstock Finance Director, Karen Fitzpatrick reviewed the ARPA program including award amount of \$2,325,579.67, period of availability for the program, eligible uses, reporting requirements and where to learn more information about ARPA. The document containing all information covered can be found at https://www.woodstockct.gov/sites/g/files/vyhlf5481/f/news/arpa_overview_10122021.pdf

First Selectman, Jay Swan presented the preliminary plan for ARPA funds based on community input that the First Selectman's Office has received to date-

1. Consulting and Administration Costs

2. Public Health: • Expansion of walking trail on Route 169 (perimeter around ball field and middle school) • Upgrades to town recreation fields (Senexet Village Field, Middle and Elementary School) • Upgrades to Roseland Park • Upgrades to Water Pollution Control Authority infrastructure • Upgrades to Town Hall HVAC System • Address water issues in Town Hall storage area and vault • Address Town Hall roof issues • Town Beach Improvements

3. Public Welfare: • Provide funds to TEEG (Acts as Woodstock's Social/Human Service Agency) • Provide funds to United Services, Inc (Behavioral Health and Social Services) • Upgrade acoustics at the town hall to comply with ADA and to better serve the public during meetings • Possible expansion of senior services • Possible support to Woodstock Small Business and Non-Profit Business Owners

4. Public Safety: • Emergency Communications System Upgrade (Highway, EMS, WFPA, Constables) • Upgrade self-contained breathing apparatus for Bungay Fire Brigade to be compatible with Muddy Brook and Woodstock Volunteers Fire Departments • Town Infrastructure

The document containing all information Jay Swan was reviewing can be found at https://www.woodstockct.gov/sites/g/files/vyhlf5481/f/news/arpa_preliminary_ideas_october_2021.pdf

PLEASE EMAIL QUESTIONS, CONCERNS OR YOUR INPUT ON HOW FUNDS SHOULD BE ALLOCATED

To: ARPA2021@WOODSTOCKCT.GOV

The Board of Selectmen meeting on the third Thursday (no holidays) of each month will take place at 7:00 pm and be hosted via Zoom. This meeting will include updates on ARPA and welcome open discussion as they prepare to put a proposal in place. Please attend the Board of Selectmen meetings for updates with ARPA

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Citizens Suggestions & Comments for ARPA Funds

- John Dlugosz
 - Asked of meeting plans in the future- will they be during evening hours and/or on Zoom as it is easier for working families. Zoom is great for working families
 - Every second Board of Selectmen Meeting will be at 7 pm and on Zoom. This meeting will have any updates pertaining to ARPA
 - Asked about the separate education funding and how/if town ARPA funds can be applied to the school/education system in town
 - The BOE has a separate allocation of funding (1.3 Million) and the BOE has asked the Town of Woodstock for assistance with certain projects that fit in the parameters of ARPA
- Dave Fortin
 - Questioned how the revenue loss number was calculated- If based on FY 2019 and 4.1% rate
 - Karen Fitzpatrick stated it was based on FY 2019 and rate of return. Also stated that there will be 4 calculations made during ARPA program and that the number is subject to change.
- Suzanne Woodward
 - Asked for clarification that the \$1.7 million number was projected loss/total funding
 - Karen confirmed that it is total loss over 4 years and subject to change
- Phillipa Paquette
 - Palmer Arboretum in need of support and fits parameters of ARPA
 - Tennis Courts at the Middle School
 - Bull Hill Rd (leading to land trust area)
- John Dlugosz
 - Noted that Woodstock funding of education is low in comparison with other towns in Connecticut in terms of dollars spent per student and this is impacting our education in Woodstock
 - Money spent to repair the working class is well spent and essential workers that have been working through COVID should be given payments improve their quality of life
 - Advised to use caution with Survey Monkey
- Megan Bard Morse
 - Encouraged residents to attend the Board of Education meeting either in person or on Zoom
 - Stated that Woodstock has been given \$1.3 million in funding but it is hard to use because they have to spend the money first and then get reimbursed
 - Suggests that ARPA fund be spent in our Libraries as they are a valuable asset to the town
- Ron
 - Encouraged the funds to be spent in a way that betters Woodstock for everyone and pleaded that the Town of Woodstock “do the right thing”
- Sandra Ahola
 - Windham Tolland 4H Camp is in need of dam repair to save their pond. This regional program is an asset to the community that many Woodstock children attend and was directly impacted by COVID
- Roger Soloman
 - Suggested funds be used at the Town Beach
 - Asked if lifeguards could be brought back to the beach
 - Karen Fitzpatrick pointed out the Allen Kelly ran a program where the swim lessons paid for the lifeguards. It is time consuming and the town does not have personnel to run a program like he did

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- Suzanne Woodward
 - Questioned the time table for the ARPA funds and what the next step is for the Town of Woodstock. Who will be making the final decision and plan from this point?
 - Karen Fitzpatrick stated that the Board of Selectmen is working with the Town Attorney until the final ruling is made to determine how the decisions will be made
- John Dlugosz
 - Stated his concerns with the idea of sustainability being a “slippery slope” using an example of fixing a walking path and then it is ruined by a hurricane
 - Pushed for Education because it is our future and sustainable
- Wayne Durst
 - Brought up the Bowen Funds
 - Karen Fitzpatrick stated that those funds are allocated to offset taxes for tax payers
- Jean Pilo
 - Suggested that the town focus on unpaved roads
 - Mentioned a new material created specifically for unpaved roads and will forward that information to Board of Selectmen

A recording of this public forum can be found at <https://youtu.be/n0Gi4pfJJnc>

Respectfully submitted by Amy Monahan, Recording Secretary.